

# SOUTH ASIAN NEWS

Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii, Manoa  
[www.hawaii.edu/csas](http://www.hawaii.edu/csas)

Spring 2010

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### *Letter From the Director / S. Shankar*

It is a time of change. At the end of this academic year, as my second three-year term concludes, I will step down as Director of CSAS. I have enjoyed supervising the multiple activities of the Center for six years. Inevitably, much remains to be done, but there is also a sense of satisfaction at leaving CSAS in a strong position, poised for growth. During the six years, South Asian Studies has been recognized as an area targeted for growth at UH. We have added several colleagues in South Asian Studies, revived the teaching of Hindi-Urdu, maintained and indeed expanded our visibility here in Hawai'i, in South Asia and elsewhere in the US through our symposia, and successfully advocated for increased (even if only modestly!) funding. We have sent several students every year to study in India on scholarships and brought distinguished scholars from South Asia for semester-long residencies. Numerous other scholars have visited us to deliver lectures as part of our collaborative lecture series with other academic units. In brief, it has been a stimulating time to be Director.

I am confident that Monisha Dasgupta, who takes over as Director at the beginning of the new academic year, will not only maintain these activities of the Center but bring her considerable energy to the task of consolidating and advancing CSAS and South Asian Studies more generally at UH. Monisha is Associate Professor in Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies, with a distinguished record of research and teaching pertaining to South Asian diasporic communities in the US. She has served on the CSAS Executive Committee for many years and has in fact been one of its most reliable resources. It is fitting that she will be the new Director and I wish her the very best.

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### *V. Sanil Visits from IIT-Delhi*

Dr. V. Sanil is the current Rama Watumull Distinguished Visiting Scholar. He is Professor of Philosophy at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi. Dr. Sanil was Charles Wallace Fellow at the Department of Philosophy, University of Liverpool, U.K. and Directeur d'études Associées, at des sciences de l'homme, Paris.

Dr. Sanil received his degree in Engineering and a PhD in Philosophy. His research interests lie in philosophical issues in cinema,

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## *Letter From Director*

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Like other universities, UH is going through a period of severe financial difficulties. CSAS is not immune from this crisis. No doubt the effects are visible to our well-wishers and constituents. However, I am happy to report that by and large we have succeeded in maintaining our core activities. We will send our usual number of students to India later this year and our annual symposium, scheduled to be held between April 14th and 16th 2010, promises a customarily full program. The theme this year is “Violence and ‘Terror’ in South Asia.” Invited lectures will be delivered by Veena Das of Johns Hopkins University, Asoka Bandarage of Georgetown University and V. Sanil of IIT-Delhi, currently Watumull Visiting Scholar at UH. This year we will also be taking participants to Shangri La, formerly heiress Doris Duke’s fabled residence and now a museum. Doris Duke’s travels in South Asia partly inspired this building which is a veritable collection of Islamic art from around the world.

This semester (Spring 2010), we are especially happy to welcome V. Sanil to UH as the Rama Watumull Visiting Scholar. Sanil is a philosopher whose interests straddle science, technology and aesthetics. Housed in the Philosophy Department, where he is teaching a graduate class, Sanil brings a keen knowledge of contemporary and classical Indian philosophy to his interactions with students and faculty. I am confident his presence on campus will spark multiple engagements whose consequences will be played out over years to come. The same could be said of Sonia Amin of Dhaka University, who spent the Fall semester with us as Andrews Chair. A historian by training, Dr. Amin manifested her expertise in South Asian Muslim women’s movements through her teaching as well as public talks. One important outcome of her visit was the increased attention to Bangladesh, an overlooked and often misunderstood part of South Asia. Her teaching especially has had the effect of generating interest in Bangladesh amongst students.

There are other important events and people to report, including the colleagues that we have continued to add as faculty and the students who continue to amaze us with their accomplishments. These are mentioned in the newsletter. To keep up with our activities on a more continual basis, we invite you to visit our website: <[www.hawaii.edu/csas](http://www.hawaii.edu/csas)>.

## *V. Sanil Visits from IIT Delhi*

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aesthetics, and the philosophy of technology. He works on art and technology in classical India, Asian cinema, Indian theater, colonialism, and phenomenology. Besides publications in English, Dr. Sanil writes in Malayalam on 19th and 20th century social movements, secularism and culture.

Originally from Kerala, Dr. Sanil went to school as a child in the state and later attended Trivandrum Kerela University in Trivandrum. In college, he studied Mechanical Engineering and subsequently pursued a Masters in Industrial Management at the Indian Institute of Science. After four years, however, he lost interest in engineering, leaving a fairly good job in Bangalore in order to study Philosophy at Indian Institute of India at Kanpur, in Uttar Pradesh.

Dr. Sanil’s PhD thesis was entitled “Critique and the Question of the Subject: A Mimetic Entwinement.” In this study, Dr. Sanil outlined three critiques, namely, Immanuel Kant’s critique of science, Martin Heidegger’s critique of technology, and the critique of human sciences found in the works of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Gilles Deleuze.

At UH Manoa this past February, Dr. Sanil delivered a public lecture on traditional temple architecture in India. This talk was a part of CSAS’ Spring Colloquium Series (see full schedule on page 15).

# Aloha!

## CSAS Congratulates New South Asian Studies Affiliate Faculty Hires



The Department of English has added **Dr. Feroza Jussawalla** to its faculty. Dr. Jussawalla was previously Professor of English at the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque. Before that, she taught at the University of Texas at El Paso for twenty years. She is the author of *Family Quarrels: Towards a Criticism of Indian Writing in English* (Peter Lang, 1984), and author/editor of *Interviews with Writers of the Postcolonial World* and *Conversations with V.S. Naipaul* both from the University Press of Mississippi. Dr. Jussawalla was born and raised in Hyderabad and did her doctorate on Indian literature in English from the University of Utah.



Last spring, the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents approved **Dr. Reed Dasenbrock** as the new vice chancellor for academic affairs at UH Manoa, where he now serves as the top academic officer. Dr. Dasenbrock also is coming to Hawaii from the University of New Mexico, where he served as provost, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and professor of English. Dr. Dasenbrock received his Ph.D. in English in 1981, and joined the faculty at New Mexico State University, where he taught for 20 years. His area of specialization in English was modernist literature, but he has published in a wide range of other areas, including post-colonial literature in English and literary theory.

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## Remembering Dr. Jagdish Sharma (1934-2010)

by Ned Bertz

The university community is mourning the loss and celebrating the life of the former director of CSAS, Emeritus Professor of History Jagdish P. Sharma. Dr. Sharma received his Ph.D. at SOAS in London, and taught at the UH from 1964 to 2003. During his remarkable tenure here, Professor Sharma did much to sustain the study of South Asia, including sitting on more than 150 MA and Ph.D. committees. He was renowned for his many publications on early Indian history, including the seminal *Republics in Ancient India* (Brill, 1968).

I first met Sharma on Valentine's Day 2006 when I was interviewing for his old position in the History Department. I'll never forget the first question he ever asked me: "What will you teach here?" In the years since, he taught me a lot on this subject. I'd invite him into my class about once a semester, which was always a real treat for the students, although always an exchange that left me feeling a bit uninspiring as a story teller in comparison. In his lectures, Sharma deployed dramatic stonping, scandalous stories, colorful anecdotes...and language—he taught with such joy and exhilaration, the same with which he approached life.

Jagdish Sharma was always right at home in the classroom. The deep love he had for his students here in the islands will always be remembered by the many people he taught and touched at the University of Hawai'i.

## Faculty and Student News

### Sai Bhatawadekar

#### (Department of Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures)

Dr. Sai Bhatawadekar joined the Department of Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures in January 2009. Since then she has reinitiated and reinvented the Hindi language program as well as introduced beginning Urdu language courses. Dr. Bhatawadekar is currently working on two projects simultaneously: she is revising her dissertation “Symptoms of Withdrawal: The Threefold Structure of Hegel and Schopenhauer’s Interpretation of Hindu Religion and Philosophy” for publication. She is also creating a beginning and intermediate Hindi language textbook and video-workbook with a new and comprehensive pedagogical approach. For this she received the National Endowment of Humanities Summer Grant, Research Relations Grant, and University Research Council Travel Grant in 2009-2010. For the 38th Annual Conference on South Asia at University of Wisconsin-Madison she organized and chaired a panel entitled “Bollywood’s Role in Projecting a Self-definition of Indian National Identity,” in which she presented her paper “‘Oye 50-50!’ – Delhi 6 and its Articulation of Hybrid Indian Identities in the Global Context.” In the last year she has also presented papers at the Modern Language Association Convention, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies in Copenhagen, and will be presenting at the South Asian Language Teachers’ Association conference in April. Given her cross-disciplinary research she continues to give talks and work closely with her colleagues in various departments and programs, including Religion, Philosophy, Asian Studies, Second Language Studies, and the National Foreign Language Resource Center.

### Ned Bertz

#### (Department of History)

Ned’s academic pursuits metaphorically sail him all around the Indian Ocean, although in reality that usually lands him in dusty libraries and archives. He spent three months last summer continuing work on his current book manuscript (on race, nationalism, and the Indian diaspora in Tanzania) and furthering his new project (a transnational history of Partition across the Indian Ocean). The research time was split between the National Library of Tanzania, reading entertaining Swahili newspapers from the 1960s and ‘70s, and various branches of the Gujarat State Archives, poring through untouched (but yet crumbling) passport records from the 1930s to ‘50s. Occasionally,

Ned scruffily surfaces to give a public talk, including two recent ones on Bombay cinema in East Africa at venues in London and Goa, another one at the University of Mumbai, and one closer to home at the East-West Center Wednesday Evening Seminar Series. He has had two articles accepted for publication this year, titled “Traces of the Past, Fragments for the Future: Historical Context of South-South Cooperation in the Indian Ocean World,” and “Africa and its ‘Outsiders’: Nationalism, Race, and the Problem of the Indian Diaspora in African History.” In the classroom, Ned’s students thankfully continue to humor him in his efforts to teach South Asian, Indian Ocean, and African history. He led (and on one forgettable occasion, cooked for) his graduate seminar in South Asian history last spring, and is excited to raise the curtain on a glossy new undergraduate class this spring on Bollywood and Indian Popular Cinema. He also continues to support his prodigious graduate and undergraduate students’ research in far-flung places, and can at the very minimum claim the achievement of never having lost a student on his watch.

### Monisha Das Gupta

#### (Department of Ethnic Studies and Women’s Studies)

Monisha Das Gupta spent her sabbatical semester in the spring of 2009 in Los Angeles doing research for her new project on the interface between the legislative efforts for immigration reform, and the demands of community-based immigrant rights organizations. During her time there, she familiarized herself with the work of Artesia-based South Asian Network <http://www.southasiannetwork.org/>. SAN has been a persistent and clear voice within the LA area’s immigrant rights movement asking organizers to move away from enforcement-oriented solutions to those that take into account the human rights of immigrants, and place the entry of immigrants into the United States within a framework of global inequality induced by neoliberal policies. SAN was one of the few organizations in the LA area that was a resource for South Asians who were profiled after 9/11, and for those who were targeted by the federal special registration program, which required men over sixteen from Muslim majority countries, including Pakistan and Bangladesh, to register themselves.

In 2009 Prof. Das Gupta published “Solidarity Work in Transnational Feminism: The Question of Class and Location” coauthored with Linda Carty in *Activist Scholarship: Radical Praxis and Emancipatory Knowledge* edited by Julia Sudbury and Margo Okazawa-Rey (Paradigm Publishers). The special issue of the *Journal of Historical Sociology* entitled “Imperial Plantations: Past and Present,” Issue 23, Number 1 that she co-edited



with Piya Chatterjee of University of California, Riverside, and Richard C. Rath, University of Hawaii at Manoa, was released in January 2010.

### **Richard Forster**

#### **(Department of History)**

Richard Forster recently had an article published in the *Columbia Undergraduate Journal of South Asian Studies* (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cujas/current.html>), entitled “Mangal Pandey: Drug-crazed Fanatic or Canny Revolutionary?” which is an abridged version of the Honors senior thesis project he is working on for his BA in History. Richard is currently in the final semester of my senior year, and with the help of funds from the UH Manoa Undergraduate Research Council and the UH Presidential Scholarship, spent part of last summer doing research at the National Archives of India in Delhi, as well as in the field in locations such as Barakpur, West Bengal and Ballia, in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Richard’s adviser, Professor Ned Bertz went well beyond the call of duty and met me at the airport in Mumbai, arranged my first nights’ accommodation, and gave me a walking/suburban train tour of some of his favorite haunts in his favorite South Asian city.

### **Reece Jones**

#### **(Department of Geography)**

In the past year Reece Jones published five journal articles and two book chapters. Two of the journal articles investigate the recent security project carried out by India along its border with Bangladesh. Since 2002, India has fenced the majority of the border, built roads in the borderlands, and substantially increased the number of guards in the area. The article “Geopolitical boundary narratives, the global war on terror, and border fencing in India” in the journal *Transactions* of the Institute of British Geographers describes how representations of Bangladesh have shifted in West Bengal in recent years towards narratives of threat and insecurity. “Agents of exception: Border security and the marginalization of Muslims in India” in the journal *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* outlines the consequences these new security practices have on the lives of Muslim on both sides of the border. Another recent theme in Reece’s work has been the 198 political enclaves along the northern border between India and Bangladesh. He published an article about the enclaves entitled “Sovereignty and statelessness” in the journal *Political Geography* and a separate chapter entitled “The forgotten lands” in the book *Borderlines and Borderlands: Political Oddities at the Edge of the Nation-State* edited by Alex Diener and Josh Hagen (Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD). Two other articles entitled “Categories, borders, and boundaries” and “The

spatiality of boundaries,” both in the journal *Progress in Human Geography*, explore the role boundaries play in shaping human experience. Finally, a previously published article “Searching for the greatest Bengali: The BBC and shifting identity categories in South Asia” was reprinted in the book *Communalism and Globalization in South Asia and its Diaspora* edited by Deana Heath and Chandana Mathur (Routledge, London). Reece is currently working on a book manuscript that considers the implications of recent border security projects in India, Israel, and the United States.

### **Rohan Kalyan**

#### **(Department of Political Science)**

Rohan published an article titled “Ghostly Images, Phantom Discourses, and the Virtuality of Globalization” in the June 2010 issue of *Globalizations*. He also published a chapter called “Hawaiian Hip Hop” in the book *Hip Hop in America: A Regional Guide* (Greenwood Press, 2009).

### **Subir Kole**

#### **(Department of Political Science)**

Subir Kole published an article entitled “‘Veshyas’ to ‘Entertainment Workers’: Evolving Discourses of Bodies, Rights and Prostitution in India,” in the journal *Asian Politics and Policy*.

### **Sankaran Krishna**

#### **(Department of Political Science)**

Sankaran Krishna’s second book, *Globalization and Postcolonialism: Hegemony and Resistance in the 21st Century*, was published by Rowman and Littlefield in 2009. He has an essay on state failure and nation-building in Sri Lanka in T. V. Paul (edited) *Weak States in South Asia* (Stanford, 2010) and another on “The Social Life of the Bomb: the ontology of an overpopulated society” in Itty Abraham (edited) *Nuclear Cultures in South Asia* (Indiana, 2009). Krishna also published four pieces on the ascent of Barack Obama through the primaries to the nomination and to the White House in the *Economic and Political Weekly* (Mumbai) in 2009-10. He was awarded the Chancellor’s Citation for Meritorious Teaching in 2009.

### **Nada McClellan**

#### **(Department of History)**

In the summers of 2008 and 2009 Nada conducted field research in Kathmandu, Nepal and in December 2009 in New York City amongst a diasporic community of Tibetans who have migrated from Limi, a remote

village on the border of Nepal and Tibet. The research is for an Honors thesis entitled: “‘But we girls, what are we supposed to do?’: Education, Migration, and the Changing Future Aspirations of Youth from Limi, Nepal,” which Ned Bertz is advising. In it Nada looks at how education and migration to Kathmandu has changed the lives of youth from the village and specifically at how it has widened the space in which youth can imagine new futures and livelihood possibilities for themselves, the ways in which this is influenced by traditional gender roles, the various contexts and constraints which shape how they navigate their lives, and how they reconcile these changes with involvement in development projects for their village. The project will be completed before Nada graduate in May.

#### **Kathy Nii**

##### **(Department of History)**

Kathy Nii’s research interest involves Bangladesh and the 1971 Liberation War. Currently, she is doing preliminary research for her senior honors project which concerns the war-time role of Bangladeshi civilians and how they have been portrayed in the English-language historiography of the war. She will be examining the role of the film *Mukhtir Gaan* and how its subject, the singing troupe, dispels the dominant image of war-time Bangladeshis as either soldiers/fighters or victims. She is planning to travel to Dhaka and Kolkata during the summer in order to conduct research for her honors project.

#### **Jaishree Odin**

##### **(Department of Interdisciplinary Studies)**

Jaishree Odin was the recipient of 2008-09 Fulbright Research Fellowship which allowed her to spend nine months in India to do research on Kashmiri literature. In addition to research, Odin gave several invited lectures: “Unity of Being: Nuruddin’s Philosophical Vision” organized by the Philosophy Department, Aligarh Muslim University, on March 18, 2009; “Lalla’s Life and Poetry: A Feminist Perspective” organized by the Women’s Study Department, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi on Dec 17, 2008; “Interdisciplinary Research” organized by the Islamic Studies Department at Jamia Milia Islamia University on Nov 17, 2008; “Relevance of Shaikh Nurrudin’ Poetry in the 21st Century,” organized by the Kashmiri Department, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Kashmir on May 27, 2009; and “Memory and Metamorphosis in Morrison’s *Beloved*,” organized by the English Department, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Kashmir, on May 20, 2009.

Odin also presented papers at two conferences--“Cultural Narratives, Globalization, and World Peace” at the Global Congress on World’s Religions—An Asian Perspective organized by the Center for the Study of Comparative Religion and Civilization at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, on January 17-19, 2009; and “Indigenous Rishi-Sufi Poetry of Kashmir” at the annual Fulbright Conference held in Kolkata on March 2-4, 2009. Her essay “Lalla’s relation to the Shaivite and Sufi Traditions in Kashmir ” was published in *The Valley of Kashmir: The Making and Unmaking of a Composite Culture*. Ed. Aparna Rao. Manohar, 2008.

#### **Subramanian Shankar**

##### **(Department of English)**

Shankar’s critical volume “Flesh and Fish Blood: Postcolonialism, Translation and the Vernacular” is forthcoming from University of California Press. He was interviewed for the anthology *Other Tongues: Reconsidering the Language Debates in India* (ed. Nalini Iyer and Bonnie Zare, Rodopi, 2009), which includes his essay “The Tamil Krishna Devotional ‘Alaippayuthey’ and World Literature.” His essay “Teaching the African Novel in a Twentieth Century Novel in English Course” has appeared in an anthology from MLA Publications. Another essay entitled “Necessity and Desire: Water and Coca Cola in India” appears in the anthology *Cultural Critique and the Global Corporation*, ed. Laura Lyons and Purnima Bose. The Spanish translation of his novel *No End to the Journey* appeared from Belacqua Ediciones y Publicaciones (Barcelona) in 2009. Also in 2009, two journalistic articles--“A Public University is a Democratic Necessity” in Honolulu Star and Bulletin and “Michael Jackson’s Was an African American Story” in The New Indian Express—were published. Since the last newsletter, he presented invited lectures at St. Berchmann’s College, National Institute of Advanced Studies, the Forum on Contemporary Theory and Madras Institute of Development Studies (all in India) and at Michigan State University. He made conference presentations at the annual South Asian Studies convention at the University of Wisconsin (Madison), at the Rethinking Marxism conference at the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) and at the 2010 Forum on Contemporary Theory annual conference in India.

# Dr. Sonia Amin Visits UH Manoa Fall 2009

In Fall 2009, Professor Sonia Nishat Amin, a Professor in the Department of History at the University of Dhaka, served as Arthur Lynn Andrews Distinguished Visiting Professor at UH Manoa. Dr. Amin's research focuses on the development of middle-class women's identities in Bengal in the late 19th century and early 20th century, and at UH, she taught a 300-level course in the Department of History entitled "India and South Asia Since the 1700s." In addition to teaching, during the course of Fall 2009 semester, Dr. Amin delivered a series of public lectures relating to her historical research. We had a chance to sit down with Dr. Amin last semester to discuss her personal and intellectual background, as well as recent developments in her native Bangladesh.

Dr. Amin was born and raised in Dhaka, a city that has witnessed many cultural, economic and political transformations over the past several decades. As one of two daughters, with no brothers, Dr. Amin lived in a family where academics was emphasized. Her father was a scientist, and Dr. Amin recalls enjoying a rather independent childhood in a home that was open to artistic expression. Her sister was a singer, her mother a dancer.

After finishing her schooling, Dr. Amin went on to study at Dhaka University, where she earned her PhD writing about Muslim women in colonial Bengal. Noting divergences in Bengali women's experiences due to religion, Dr. Amin analyzed three separate discourses of middle class women's subjectivity in colonial Bengal: Victorian (Anglo-Christian), Brahmo (Hindu), and Muslim. Each of these three discourses underwent profound transformations at the turn of the century. With respect to Muslim women, Dr. Amin's intervention was dealing primarily with middle class identities and subjectivities.

During the course of last semester, Dr. Amin delivered five public lectures in and around UH Manoa. The first was a part of the Women's Studies Colloquium Series, and was entitled "Revisiting the Trauma of 1971: Selina Parveen in the Killing Fields of Rayer Bazaar." The second was part of the East-West Center Wednesday Evening Seminar, and was called "A History of Women's Emancipation in Bengal and Bangladesh." Next was a presentation entitled "Modernity and the Women of Bangladesh and Bengal." Dr. Amin then gave a talk that was a part of the South Asian Studies Colloquium Series and co-sponsored by Muslim Societies in Asia. This talk was called "Annette Akroyd Beveridge and Henry Beveridge in Bengal." Finally, and perhaps most notably, Dr. Amin gave a lecture at the world renowned Shangri La, Dorris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art. Her lecture there was titled "From Andarmahal to Ashram/Anjuman and School: the Life and Work of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossein."

We at CSAS wish to thank Dr. Sonia Amin for her tireless and immensely interesting lecture circuit, and wish her the best back in Dhaka!



# The Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Hawai‘i

## 27th Annual Spring Symposium



## Violence and ‘Terror’ in South Asia

April 14 - April 16, 2010  
Center for Korean Studies Auditorium

### Invited Lectures:

✦ **Veena Das** will deliver a talk titled **“Violence, Terror, and the Irreality Effect”** on **Thursday, April 15 at 9:00am**. She is Krieger-Eisenhower Professor of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University. Her research focuses on sectarian violence, looking particularly into questions of social suffering and subjectivity. She has also written extensively on feminist movements, gender studies, and post-colonial and post-structural theory in South Asia and Europe.

⌘ **Asoka Bandarage** will deliver a talk titled **“Conceptualizing South Asian Conflicts: Terrorism, Identity, Political Economy”** on **Friday, April 16 at 9:00am**. She teaches at the Georgetown University Public Policy Institute, where she specializes in comparative politics, South Asia and conflict analysis and resolution. She is the author of several books that deal with the history and politics of the separatist conflict in Sri Lanka.

✦ **V. Sanil** will deliver a talk titled **“The Militant Subject and the Choreography of Violence”** on **Thursday, April 15, at 1:30pm**. He is professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. His areas of interest include continental philosophy, hermeneutics, art and technology.



### Panel Discussions:

- ✦ **Identity and Culture** (4/15; 10:30 am)
- ✦ **State and Nationalism** (4/15; 3:00 pm)
- ✦ **The Politics of Displacement** (4/16; 10:30 am)



### Evening Reception:

⌘ **Pupus and Conversation.** Sponsored by the Graduate Student Organization. Thursday, April 15, at 6:00pm.

### UH Manoa Student Showcase:

⌘ *Featuring dance, theater, and short films by current UH Manoa students.* Thursday, April 15, at 7:00pm.



Made possible through the generous support of the  
**G.J. & Ellen Watumull Foundation**

Co-Sponsored by English Department and Graduate Student's Organization

Spring 2010

*South Asian News*

## THE J. WATUMULL SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE STUDY OF INDIA

The J. Watumull Scholarship for the Study of India aims to promote understanding of India through scholarship support of University of Hawai'i students who present a focused and well-developed proposal to study for a minimum of two months in India. The scholarship is generously supported by the J. Watumull Fund.

The scholarship supports University of Hawai'i students in areas of study such as the visual and performing arts, history, philosophy, religion, and politics, as well as any other field including the professional schools and community college programs. These students are expected to be enrolled in courses at a recognized Indian institution or to be conducting some pre-approved independent study overseen by a faculty member at UH in cooperation with a scholar in India. Students may also choose to participate in an approved study abroad program sponsored by another U.S. institution.

Complete information about the J. Watumull Scholarship for the Study of India is available on the CSAS website: [www.hawaii.edu/csas](http://www.hawaii.edu/csas). Applications are typically due in the early Spring of the award's calendar year.

### ***J. Watumull Report by Cary Hitchcock***

During the summer of 2009 I participated in the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) summer Sanskrit language program held in Pune, India. Because of the J. Watumull Scholarship, I was able to take part in this wonderful opportunity.

Under the guidance of the AIIS trained professors, I further developed my experience with Sanskrit. The program focused on reading, listening, speaking, writing, grammar, and translation comprehension. This occasion gave me the medium to explore the philological dimensions of a breadth of Sanskrit texts. Some of the texts that I worked with will help me develop my master's thesis.

This summer, through the AIIS program, I examined one of the pivotal mythological texts on Jagannath and the Rath Yatra – Puruottamaketrāmhtmya. This work is a significant portion of my thesis, which examines the ways in which the Rath Yatra (an annual religious festival held in Puri, India) is constructed in the Sanskrit literary tradition.

On a daily basis, I was immersed in the language at my home-stay and at school. In small groups, I was able to work closely with texts pertaining to my interests as well as explore new genres in Sanskrit literature. I participated in some wonderful guest lectures, which expanded my diversity as a student and introduced me to contributors in Indian scholarship.

The AIIS program arranged a home stay living situation for me. I was able to interact with the local culture of Maharashtra. Some of the most memorable moments of the summer were late night discussions with my host mom—who was able to converse in Sanskrit. She often helped me with my homework and served me hot chai during my late night study sessions. Also, because of the home-stay, I ate amazing local Marathi food. It was such a treat.

During my stay in Pune, I was able to view several local festivals. Witnessing these summer festivities expanded my understanding of the local religious traditions of Maharashtra. On several occasions, I attended local concerts. I found these performances to be inspiring and enthralling. I was amazed to see the performers chant in Sanskrit and show a complete mastery of their instruments. They were truly memorable. Sometimes the performances would last almost all night, and everyone in the audience would cheer for more and more.

The program also went on a weekend trip. We visited a small city named Kolhapur. Here we visited several ancient temples, and were able to translate some Sanskrit inscriptions that date back to the fourteenth century. I found it very meaningful to apply some of the skills that I had learned.

Interacting with other American students who study Sanskrit was also a positive experience. I was able to build lifelong friendships with students from all over the U.S. It was great to be exposed to different ideas and engage with an emerging community of American scholars.

I am truly grateful that the J. Watumull Scholarship gave me this experience to study Sanskrit through the AIIS. Without its help, I would not have been able to participate in this most memorable summer.

## *The Fog of the Drone War in the North West Frontier of Pakistan* by *Syed Sami Raza*

On New Year's eve the Taliban struck a CIA base in southeastern Afghanistan, killing eight American intelligence officers. Dubbed one of the biggest attacks on an American intelligence agency, the response it provoked was also enormous. Of the various questions raised by the nature of the attack, almost all start from an inability to understand how an intelligence agency whose sole mission is to spy on militants, and which operates in a highly clandestine milieu, could itself become a target of the militants. Was it because of a faulty security system? Was it because of the superior technological prowess of the so-called "primitive" militants? Was it because of the self assurance of the CIA about its intelligence services or the self confidence of the militants in their human tactics? The CIA has ordered an investigation of the attack, but the obvious question that haunts all investigations is whether they will clarify or mystify the attacks. Are we clear about 9/11, and/or its details?

American response to the attack came in the form of intensifying the ongoing drone war in the tribal belt of the North West Frontier province of Pakistan. This war uses unmanned aerial vehicles, the most extensively used are the MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper aircrafts, and began in early 2004. Because the rugged mountainous terrain of the North West Frontier makes it difficult for regular ground assault, and partly because of the fear of violating the sovereignty of Pakistan, the American forces have relied heavily on the unmanned drones for targeting Al Qaeda and Taliban elements. Using state-of-the-art technology, drones have been expected to improve intelligence on the militants, increase accuracy in acquiring targets, reduce collateral damage in attacks and eliminate risking American lives in combats. However, far from living up to those expectations, drones have increased the fog of war.



Afghan man, photo by Amrapali Basumatary

For instance, a hunt for the main sponsor of the attack on the CIA, Hakimullah Mehsud, led to several attacks in North Waziristan. Initially Pakistani authorities claimed Mehsud was killed in one of the attacks, but after a few days Mehsud released an audio tape denouncing the claims. This was not the first time that the claims regarding the killing of the suspects turned out wrong. Bill Raggio, in *The Long War Journal*, writes, "Previously, al Qaeda leaders Ayman al Zawahiri, Abd al Hadi al Iraqi, Abu Obaidullah Al Masri, Adam Gadahn, Ibn Amin, and Rashid Rauf have all been reported killed in various strikes, but these men later resurfaced. Similarly, Sa'ad bin Laden was recently reported killed, but he is now thought to be alive. And Abu Khabab al Masri was reported dead several times before he actually was killed in a July 2008 strike."

As these attacks do not kill the suspects on many occasions, the question then is who do they kill? The numbers of civilian casualties have been mounting and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the US to accept the human disaster being caused. This disaster has been prevented so far by presenting a range of contradicting figures, partly because of limited ground access to Waziristan by both government and media sources. Let me refer to two such extreme reports. In their independent investigation David Kilcullen and Andrew Exum found out that drone strikes have "killed some 700 civilians. This is 50 civilians for every militant killed, a hit rate of 2 percent." In other words 98 percent of those killed in drone attacks were civilians. On the other hand, Bergen and Tiedemann of the New America Foundation instead provide that since 2006, the U.S. drones have carried out 83 attacks inside Pakistan which have killed between 760 and 1,050 people out of whom 505-696 were militants and 252-316 civilians.

A milieu of uncertainty and ambiguity haunts the drone war, which is on the verge of loosing the war for minds and hearts. Numerous bungled attacks have not only provided Taliban with recruiting opportunities from the affected families and villages but also provided platform to orchestrate vicious propaganda against the American and Pakistani governments. What the American military might learn from this situation is that the fog of war never helps the state armies but only the militants. And in order to win the war against terror priority should be given to eliminate the technological and tactical flaws that have been causing a fog of war which is jeopardizing the material and moral victory.



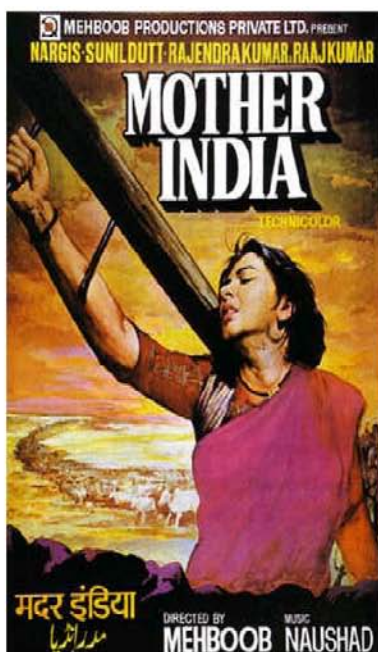
# HIST 452D -- History and Film: Asia/Pacific

*Bollywood & Indian Popular Cinema, from Independence to the Global Era of Slumdog Millionaire*  
at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa  
proudly presents the

## 6<sup>th</sup> UH Bollywood Film Series/spring '10

**ROOM:** HIG 110

**DAY & TIME:** MONDAYS, 3.30PM



### SCHEDULE:

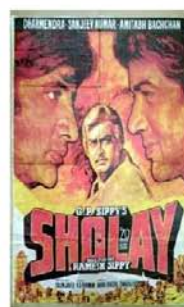
January 11 *Bollywood Calling* – 2001  
January 25 *Ghajini* – 2008

February 1 *Om Shanti Om* – 2007  
February 8 *Mother India* – 1957  
February 22 *Mirch Masala* – 1985

March 1 *Lagaan* – 2001  
March 8 *Hey Ram* – 2000  
March 15 *Sholay* – 1975  
March 29 *Dil Chahta Hai* – 2001

April 5 *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* – 1995  
April 12 *Dev D* – 2009  
April 19 *Satya* – 1998  
April 26 *Dil Se* – 1998

May 3 *Rang De Basanti* – 2006



Free and open to the public. For more information, email [ned.bertz@hawaii.edu](mailto:ned.bertz@hawaii.edu) or call 956-6766.



## Poetry by Sai Bhatawadekar's Hindi Students

जब मेरे प्यार ने मुझे प्यार किया

मार्था रेंडोल्फ

मेरे प्यार ने मुझे एक फूल दिया

एक फूल बहुत रंगीला

वे रंग थे जो मैं ने मेरे मन में देखे

जब मेरे प्यार ने मुझे प्यार किया

उस फूल की खुशबू थी

तेज़, मसालेदार और मीठी

वही खुशबू हवा में थी

जब मेरे प्यार ने मुझे प्यार किया

मेरे प्यार ने मुझे एक कोयल दी

उसके गाने ने स्वर्ग को हँसाया

और यह गाना मेरे दिल में गाया

जब मेरे प्यार ने मुझे प्यार किया

मेरे प्यार ने मुझे एक अनोखा हीरा दिया

उसके बहुत पहलू थे तेज़ और रोशन

और वह रोशनी जो उसके दिल में नाची

मेरे दिल में भी नाची

जब मेरे प्यार ने मुझे प्यार किया

हमारा प्यार जिंदगी के स्वादों की दावत था

और हम ने जिंदगी की खुशी पी

नमकीन आँसू कड़वे झगड़े खट्टा दुख

मसालेदार आरजू और मीठी खुशियाँ

ओ मेरे मधुर प्रेम, क्यों तुम यहाँ नहीं हो?  
मैं तुम्हारा केवल प्यार चाहती हूँ।

हमारे ग्रीष्म का अंत हो गया है  
पर अभी तक हर पल हमारी दूरी  
मुझे कड़ी धूप जैसी लगती है  
वर्षा दुःख लाती है  
और अश्रू नहाती है  
मैं सुख भूल गयी हूँ  
पर मैं तुम्हारा कमल मुख नहीं भुला पाती।

--- तमारा लूथी --- (Tamara Luthy Hindi 102)



## ***2010-2011 J. Watumull Scholars Announced***

The Center for South Asian Studies is proud to announce this year's J. Watumull Scholarship for the Study of India recipients! This year there are three awardees:

**Bryce Beemer** is pursuing his PhD in the Department of History and focuses primarily on Southeast Asia. With the J. Watumull Scholarship Bryce plans to travel to the Northeast Indian state of Manipur, where he will be based at Manipur University's Center for Manipur Studies and Center for Myanmar Studies. Here, Bryce will research cultural exchanges facilitated by slave gathering warfare and large scale population transfers. Manipur was depopulated in the 18th and early-19th centuries by the Burmese military forces. He has recently conducted research on this community in Burma and will follow up this research with interview, archival, and observational study in Manipur.

**Alhadini Conder** is a Masters student in the Department of History, where she focuses on South Asian history and studies with Ned Bertz, an affiliate faculty of CSAS a current member of its Executive Committee. With the J. Watumull Scholarship, Alhadini's intention is to participate in an intensive summer language program in Hindi at the Landour Language School, located in Mussoorie in the north Indian State of Uttaranchal. She wants to study Hindi in order to adequately prepare for defending her thesis in Spring 2011 and enter Hindi 202 in Fall 2010.

**Tamara Luthy** is a Masters student in the Department of Anthropology, where she studies ecological anthropology. The title of her project is "Vaishnavism, Sacred Groves, and Political Ecology," and with the J. Watumull Scholarship, Tamara will travel this summer to Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh, as well as the backwaters of Kerala.

### ***Bollywood Film at HIFF***

By Rohan Kalyan

At the 2009 Hawai'i International Film Festival (HIFF), four Bollywood films were screened. "My Heart Goes Hadippa!," starring Shahid Kapur and Rani Mukherjee, is a romantic comedy about a young woman who dresses as a man so that she can play the game that she loves, cricket. "Om Shanti Om," which set a Bollywood record in 2009 for international revenue, stars Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone, currently two of Bollywood's hottest stars. A story of reincarnation, cosmic fate, and romance, the film dazzled audiences in Honolulu and all over the world. Next, there was "Billu Barber," another Shah Rukh Khan starrer. This film is about a famous film star who returns to his home village to shoot his latest movie. The story is told from the perspective of Billu Barber, however, a simple man who was childhood friends with film star and is forced to reexamine his own life in the wake of his friend's homecoming. Finally, HIFF also screened the film "Delhi-6," about a young Indian American who returns to Old Delhi to take care of his ailing grandmother and gets caught up in an urban legend involving a monkey that terrorizes residents in the centuries-old city.

The films included in HIFF were all Bollywood blockbusters, and perhaps commercial success was the major criteria used to select international films. But this is unfortunate, since the selection presented a decidedly one-dimensional perspective on Indian film. Many films coming from India in recent years have deliberately strayed from the formulas and cliches of Bollywood, and have touched upon grittier themes like drugs, sex, and violence. Such films have often taken the urban context as a backdrop in which to explore cultural transformations and contradictions that mark contemporary Indian society. In particular, films like "Khosla Ka Ghosla" (2006), "Oye Lucky! Lucky Oye!" (2008), and "Dev D," (2009) might provide richer examples of new trends in South Asian film, straying from the predictability and homogeneity of Bollywood film. It would be nice to see HIFF include such films in the future.

# Center for South Asian Studies

## 2010/2011 Colloquium Series

**29th September: Rohan Kalyan** (UHM Department of Political Science, Center for South Asian Studies)

*Neoliberal Globalities and the Politics of Documentary Film*

Co-sponsored by the Department of Political Science.

**7th October: Amy Donahue** (UHM Department of Philosophy)

*Are Classical Indian Buddhist Nominalists Really Quinean?*

Co-sponsored by Department of Philosophy.

**9th October: Sonia Amin** (University of Dhaka, Fall 2009 Andrews Chair and Visiting Professor in Department of History)

*Modernity and the Women of Bangladesh and Bengal*

Co-sponsored by Muslim Societies in Asia and School of Pacific and Asian Studies.

**22nd October: Matthew LoPresti** (Hawaii Pacific University)

*Translating Kṛṣṇa: Meta-Theological Implications of Bhagavadgītā IX.23*

Co-sponsored by the Department of Philosophy.

**4th November: Sonia Amin** (University of Dhaka, Visiting Professor in Department of History)

*Annette Akroyd Beveridge and Henry Beveridge in Bengal*

Co-sponsored by the Department of History.

**17th November: Syed Sami Raza** (UHM Department of Political Science)

*State, Sovereignty, and Religion in Pakistan*

Co-sponsored by Department of Political Science

**19th February: V. Sanil** (IIT-Delhi, Spring 2010 Rama Watumull Visiting Scholar in Department of Philosophy)

*Technology without Theory: A Case of Classical Indian Architecture*

Co-sponsored by the Department of Philosophy.

**24th February: Rohan Kalyan** (UHM Department of Political Science, Center for South Asian Studies)

*Virtual Cultures of Capitalism at the Rural Frontier of the Global Economy*

Part of the International Cultural Studies Spring 2010 Speaker Series.

**16th March: Deeksha Sivakumar** (UHM Department of Religion)

*Bomma Kolu: Continuity and Change in Domestic Tamil Ritual*

Co-sponsored by Department of Religion

**14th - 16th April:**

**27th Annual CSAS Spring Symposium**

**Violence and 'Terror' in South Asia**

see <http://www.hawaii.edu/csas> for program details



### Center for South Asian Studies

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**We're on the Web!**

[www.hawaii.edu/csas](http://www.hawaii.edu/csas)

Newsletter Staff:

Rohan Kalyan

### *About Our Organization...*

Strategically located, and with a multicultural heritage, the state of Hawai'i has always been uniquely international in outlook. The people, traditions, and cultural milieu of this island state in the Pacific provide a strong and continuing bond with Asia.

Beginning with the establishment of the Oriental Institute in 1935 and a still ongoing series of East-West Philosophers' Conferences in 1939. This emphasis continued with the establishment of the journal "Philosophy East and West" in 1951 and the Asian Studies Program.

The Center for South Asian Studies was created in 1985. Since then the objective of the Center has been to coordinate and integrate, by juxtaposing humanistic with scientific scholarship, and historical and contemporary data. The Center thus serves to illuminate specific questions of regional interest, and complements and bridges the disciplinary departments directly related to it.

The Center guides and assists study of both past and present societies and cultures of South Asia and promotes faculty interaction across departmental lines to foster comparative and interdisciplinary research on the region. South Asia includes contemporary Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India (including the Andaman and Nicobar Islands), Lakshadweep, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Tibet.

27th Annual Spring Symposium

## **Violence and "Terror" in South Asia**

April 14-16, 2010 in Honolulu, Hawai'i

### **Center For South Asian Studies**

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Honolulu, HI 96822

